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Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

February 12, 2012

City Council  
City and County of Honolulu  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-3077

Councilman Ernest Y. Martin, Chair  
Councilman Ikaika Anderson, Vice Chair  
Members of the City Council

Aloha mai kākou

I am writing in support of Bill 10(2012), Relating to the Use of Bags Provided to Customers, the purpose of this ordinance being to regulate the use of non-biodegradable plastic bags and certain other bags provided to customers. In essence, the effect of this bill is that businesses shall be prohibited from providing non-biodegradable plastic bags to their customers at the point of sale.

As a Hawaiian and a resident of O'ahu, I wish to applaud the Council on this bold move. Clearly,

non-biodegradable bags harm the 'āina. Unlike its counterpart, non-biodegradable material does not decompose naturally. Rather than disappear on their own, these materials pile up in landfills. These materials are synthetic and entirely man-made. O'ahu has limited land resources; we cannot afford landfills to accommodate such materials, and certainly maintaining landfills with non-biodegradable bags is costly.

Biodegradable bags are made of natural components, such as plants, and unlike non-biodegradable bags, decompose easily and quickly and are less harmful to the environment. However, FuturEnergia cautions that without the right temperature, micro-organisms and humidity, biodegradable plastics could do more harm than good. In a landfill, the plastics emit greenhouse gases as they break down, harming the ozone layer. Overall, though, biodegradable materials are beneficial when dealt with properly. (Note: FuturEnergia is an educational initiative that explores pros and cons of materials that contribute towards energy efficiency.)

Overall biodegradable materials provide environmental benefits, where non-biodegradable products carry no benefits. Biodegradable materials are earth-friendly.

Malama 'āina. Support passage of bill 10 and assure, though, that biodegradable plastics are properly handled so that they do not emit greenhouse gases as they break down.

Me kealoha pumehana

/s/ Leimomi Khan by email

LEIMOMI KHAN

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